

Work Session meeting of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Ridgefield was held on March 25, 2019 at 6:03 p.m. The meeting was held at the Ridgefield Community Center, 725 Slocum Avenue, Ridgefield, New Jersey 07657.

Mayor Suarez stated that this meeting of the Mayor and Council is being conducted pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act; adequate notice of the meeting has been given by publishing notice in The Record. Furthermore, notice was posted in the Borough of Ridgefield Municipal Building.

Roll Call: Mayor Suarez, Councilman Castelli, Councilman Penabad, Councilman Shim, Councilman Jimenez, Councilman Kontolios and Councilwoman Larkin are present.

Kurt Vierheilig and Lloyd Rosenberg from DMR Architects presented on the potential new town hall. Kurt from DMR stated they prepared a program for the ideal site and determined the site on Shaler Boulevard and Slocum Avenue as the best site to accommodate the town hall. DMR Architects put together some site plans and developed a building design.

DMR Architects worked with Maser to develop the site plans. The site plan and building location map are based on the flood hazard line so the design is not in the zone. The building is rectangular with two stories and it has two parking lots at different elevations. The public parking will have approximately 49 spaces and the other parking lot for the police department and building department is approximately 39 spaces.

The Municipal Court and main lobby are off of Shaler Boulevard. There is a ramp, public plaza and stairs at the main entrance. The lower level will access the police department and building department. Each floor is a little over 13,000 square feet and is divided up into segments.

The entrance off of Shaler Boulevard will have a sky light lobby. The municipal court, council chamber, court offices, and support for the court will be on one side. The court room will act as a council chamber and would be 100% ADA compliant. The other side will be the town hall. The design allows for the municipal section to be closed off after hours.

The lower level will have stairs and an elevator leading to it. The building department, police records bureau, and the police headquarters will be located on the lower level. The police headquarters will be fully compliant with the Department of Corrections. There will be a process and booking area, cells, interview rooms, and both male and female locker rooms.

If the building gets approved the two garages will be removed. DMR Architects wanted the design to match the rest of the residential buildings along the street and gave the building a good residential scale look. There will be a little plaza with the flags and the town hall will be a primarily masonry building.

Councilman Shim asked if there will be an electronic information sign at the main entrance. Kurt from DMR stated they have not gotten into that level of detail yet but they have talked about it.

Councilman Castelli asked if it was possible to connect the two parking lots. Kurt from DMR stated it is possible but it would be over the flood hazard zone. He stated the lower parking lot is technically in the flood zone but it has never been impacted.

Councilman Jimenez asked how difficult it would be to get information on a potential foot bridge. Kurt from DMR stated it would be the same as developing a building in a flood area. He stated he thinks it is possible but he is not a civil engineer.

The Mayor asked if DMR Architects did a study on the police and parking spaces. Kurt from DMR stated they did but he does not recall the number. Councilman Castelli stated the police will probably still have to keep some vehicles down at the pistol range.

The Mayor asked the public if they have any questions.

Geri Hernandez – 870 Edgewater Avenue – She asked why the potential new Borough Hall got rejected the last time. She wanted to know if there were other sites considered because the site is in the middle of town where there are a lot of children getting out of school and a lot of traffic. She stated there seems to be many issues with the potential new Borough Hall.

Councilman Castelli stated the building got rejected last time because the design included the Recreation Department and some people did not want the Recreation Department to be connected with the Borough Hall. Councilman Castelli stated the town looked at other sites and this is the site the architects recommended. Kurt from DMR stated the current site accommodates the needs. Lloyd from DMR stated all the issues were addressed and the solutions are manageable. He stated the town needs 50 acres of land to do everything and only the spot on Shaler Boulevard and Slocum Avenue covers the area.

Geri Hernandez asked if there was a study on the Great Bear water. Councilman Castelli stated the study is being done now. He stated the town is hoping to find a new location for the Ridgefield Garden.

Sean Shilinsky -764 Abbott Avenue – He asked how the building will be heated and cooled. He asked if there would be any solar. He is concerned there would not be enough parking.

Kurt from DMR stated the building will be heated and cooled with rooftop units. Solar panels have not yet been decided. Councilman Penabad stated the police parking will be separate from the 50 parking spots and believes parking will not be a concern.

The Mayor asked if the top lot can get access to the building department. Kurt from DMR stated there will be stairs and an elevator.

Sean Shilinsky asked if DMR Architects determines the cost of the building. The Mayor stated the plan is currently preliminary and there is not a cost yet.

Geri Hernandez asked which studies the town are waiting for. Councilman Castelli stated the town is waiting for an Earth study. The Mayor stated the planners at DMR Architect evaluate a traffic study.

The Mayor asked what the next step is. Lloyd from DMR stated they are waiting for Maser.

Meeting adjourned 6:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda M. Silvestri,  
Borough Clerk